

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 253  
By Miller L

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Morgan Freeman for his reception of the Academy Award for the Best Supporting Actor and his lifetime of achievement and excellence in American cinema and television.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should salute those gifted citizens who through their inherent talents and extraordinary efforts have distinguished themselves as actors, directors, and narrators; and

WHEREAS, one such noteworthy person is Morgan Freeman, who was born June 1, 1937, in Memphis, Tennessee; he grew up in Mississippi and drew upon the language and culture of that region to bring veracity to certain roles, while never allowing it to limit the breadth of parts available to him; and

WHEREAS, from 1955 to 1959, Mr. Freeman performed his patriotic duty as a mechanic in the United States Air Force; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Freeman first came to be well-known on the television series *The Electric Company*, from 1971 to 1976, playing the characters Mark, Easy Reader, Mel Mounds the DJ, Count Dracula, Mad Scientist, and the Cop; this was followed by a number of television movie roles quietly establishing his credentials until the 1987 film *Street Smart* in which Mr. Freeman earned his first of four Oscar nominations with his 1987 role as a tough pimp named "Fast Black"; and

WHEREAS, his moving portrayal of a chauffeur in the segregated US South in "Driving Miss Daisy" (1989) won him a Golden Globe in the United States and a Silver Bear at the Berlin film festival; he also earned his second Oscar nomination, this time for Best Actor; and

WHEREAS, the father of four earned his third Oscar nomination in 1994, also for best actor, for his role in the film production of the Stephen King work, "The Shawshank Redemption," where he played Ellis Boyd "Red" Redding; and

WHEREAS, now, at age 67, his career spans fifty-seven completed films to his credit, with many others announced or in production; Mr. Freeman is himself an accomplished producer of six films, including an upcoming project concerning World War II and a work currently in production, *Colors Straight Up*; and

WHEREAS, his roles in *Glory*, *Amistad*, *The Shawshank Redemption*, *Outbreak*, *Along Came a Spider*, *Nurse Betty*, and *Lean on Me*, among many others, served to make Morgan Freeman a familiar and formidable presence in American cinema; and

WHEREAS, highly respected among his peers, Mr. Freeman is recognized for his ability, according to Chris Herrington, to be "...both authoritative and warm, to project wisdom and experience and repel irony...he lends a gravitas to almost every film he's in..."; and

WHEREAS, Morgan Freeman maintains a home in Charleston, Mississippi, and operates Madidi, an upscale restaurant, and Ground Zero, a blues club in Clarksdale, Mississippi, along with numerous other business and charitable interests in the area; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Freeman acted laudably as the Honorary Chairman of the Fourth Annual Memphis International Film Festival, which ran from March 27-30, 2003, and featured several of his films, including the 1993 *Bopha!*, a depiction and examination of the injustices of apartheid in South Africa, which he directed; and

WHEREAS, acting in his second collaboration with Clint Eastwood, the first being 1992's *Unforgiven*, in 2004 Mr. Freeman gave an extraordinary performance in the female boxing drama "Million Dollar Baby," playing former boxer Eddie "Scrap-Iron" Dupris; and

WHEREAS, for his outstanding performance. Mr. Freeman was duly honored with the Oscar for Best Supporting Actor, an overdue commendation for one of the most hardworking and moving performers of his trade; and

WHEREAS, Morgan Freeman is blessed with the love and companionship that he shares with his lovely wife, Myrna Colley-Lee, and his four beautiful children, Alfonso, Sailfoulaye, Deena, and Morgana; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Freeman epitomizes the spirit and dedication that are characteristic of a true Tennessean; his commitment to excellence to his profession serves as a model and inspiration to those who will follow him; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly finds it appropriate to pause in its deliberations to acknowledge and applaud Morgan Freeman for his life of outstanding contribution to American screen and television acting, and his beneficial charitable and business activities; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby honor and commend Morgan Freeman, a man of great integrity and exceptional creative spirit, for a lifetime of achievement and excellence in cinema and television, congratulate him for his reception of the Academy Award for the Best Supporting Actor, and extend to him our best wishes for every future success and satisfaction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.